

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 AID-20 IO-12 AGR-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00

RSR-01 /169 W

----- 082620

R 021055 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9499

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CANTHO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL NHATRANG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5406

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: SENATOR NGAI' S APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT; CHANGE IN MINISTRY OF LAND REFORM

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: ( A ) SAIGON 5315; ( B ) SAIGON 5027 AND FBIS S-260630;  
( C ) BIEN HOA A-1, MARCH 2, 1973

1. SENATOR NGUYEN VAN NGAI' S MARCH 30 APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER  
OF URUAL DEVELOPMENT PUT A TRUSTED AND POLITICALLY ASTUTE  
ADMINISTRATION LOYALIST IN CHARGE OF A MINISTRY THAT PRESIDENT  
THIEU DOUBTLESS CONSIDERS AN IMPORTANT WEAPON IN THE POLITICAL  
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STRUGGLE WITH THE COMMUNISTS. NGAI WILL DIRECTLY CONTROL THE RD CADRE, WHO HAVE DIRECT AND REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE RURAL POPULATION. HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO MAKE THESE CADRE MORE SENSITIVE AND MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE GVN' S POLITICAL OBJECTIVES IN THE CURRENT STAGE. NGAI' S APPOINTMENT APPEARS TO GO HAND IN HAND WITH HOANG DUC NHA' S APPOINTMENT AS COMMISSIONER GENERAL OF STATE FOR INFORMATION, A POST FROM WHICH HE DIRECTS THE GVN' S INFORMATION CADRE, WHOSE CONTACT WITH THE POPULACE ALSO HAS A HIGH POLITICAL CONTENT.

2. THE APPOINTMENT OF NGAI, A CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DEMOCRACY PARTY, STRENGTHENS THE PARTY' S DIRECT CONTROL OVER ANOTHER KEY POINT IN THE GVN' S POLITICAL APPARATUS. HE NOT ONLY CONTROLS THE RD CADRE AND THEIR PROGRAMS, BUT THE RD MINISTRY' S NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER AT VUNG TAU, WHERE ALL RD AND INFORMATION CADRE AND VILLAGE AND HAMLET OFFICIALS RECEIVE THEIR TRAINING. NGAI' S APPOINTMENT FOLLOWS BY ONLY A FEW WEEKS THE APPOINTMENT OF THIEU LOYALIST COL. QUACH HUYNH HA AS NTC DIRECTOR, REPLACING THE CAPABLE BUT POLITICALLY INDEPENDENT COL. NGUYEN BE. AS NOTED IN REF C, BE REFUSED TO TO ACCEDE TO THIEU' S WISHES TO CHANGE THE NTC INTO A TRAINING GROUND FOR DEMOCRACY PARTY CADRE; HA AND NGAI CAN BE EXPECTED TO CARRY OUT THIEU' S WISHES.

3. THE NGAI APPOINTMENT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A DEMOTION FOR CAO VAN THAN, THE INCUMBENT RD MINISTER. THAN HAS HELD THE RD PORTFOLIO CONCURRENTLY WITH THE LAND REFORM AND AGRICULTURAL, FISHERIES AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO SINCE JANUARY 1971. THE EMBASSY HAS OBSERVED THAT THAN WAS SPREAD VERY THIN, AND HE HIMSELF HAS TOLD US OFFICIALS THAT HE HAS LONG WANTED RELIEF FROM PART OF HIS HEAVY LOAD.

4. THE CHANGE IN THE NAME OF THE MINISTRY OF LAND REFORM REFLECTS THE ADMINISTRATION' S RECENT CHANGE IN EMPHASIS AWAY FROM PACIFICATION AND TOWARD RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT. THE CHANGE IN THE MINISTRY' S NAME AND MISSION CAME ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIEU' S FARMERS' DAY SPEECH AT CAN THO ON MARCH 26, IN WHICH HE PROMISED AN ACCELERATED PROGRAM OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION, INCLUDING A NEW FIVE- YEAR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO RAISE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND INCOME ( REF B). BENNETT

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**TAGS:** PINT, VS  
**To:** BANGKOK  
BIEN HOA  
CAN THO  
DANANG  
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MANILA

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